

File ref:

**County:** Hampshire

**Site Name:** Eelmoor Marsh SSSI

**Status:** Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981

**Local Planning Authority:** Hampshire County Council, Rushmoor Borough Council

**National Grid Reference:** SU 841533

**Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000:** 186

**1:10,000:** SU 85 SW

**Area:** 65.94 (ha) 162.9 (ac)

**Date Notified (Under 1949 Act):** 1978

**Date of Last Revision:** -

**Date Notified (Under 1981 Act):** 20 October 1984  
**Revision:** 29 January 1993

**Date of Last**

**Date confirmed:** 9 July 1993

**Other Information:**

**Reasons for Notification:**

Eelmoor Marsh is part of the formerly extensive heathland area near Aldershot, on the Tertiary deposits of the Thames Basin. The SSSI comprises a range of habitat types including an area of deep peat with structural affinities to a raised bog; the bog surface supports a vegetation dominated by purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*, deer grass *Scirpus cespitosus* and cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium*, with an extensive shrub layer of bog myrtle *Myrica gale*. Other habitats present within the SSSI include a network of ditches, areas of Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* and birch *Betula* species and an area of species-rich grass heath.

The exceptionally rich acid bog flora supports at least 250 species of flowering plants and grasses and is of interest for its large populations of insectivorous plants such as common butterwort *Pinguicula vulgaris*, pale butterwort *P. lusitanica*, small bladderwort *Utricularia minor*, common sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* and long-leaved sundew *D. intermedia*.

The species-rich grass heath within the SSSI is of a type found in the New Forest but rare elsewhere in Hampshire. It is characterised by the presence of red fescue *Festuca rubra*, common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*, heather *Calluna vulgaris* and dwarf gorse *Ulex minor*. A number of species considered indicative of agriculturally-unimproved grasslands have been recorded in this area including mat-grass *Nardus stricta*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum*, purple moor-grass, lousewort *Pedicularis sylvatica*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, carnation sedge *Carex panicea*, petty whin *Genista anglica*, heath grass *Danthonia decumbens*, pill sedge *Carex pilulifera*, saw-wort *Serratula tinctoria*, green-winged orchid *Orchis morio* and adder's-tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*. Of particular interest is the large population of pale dog violet *Viola lactea*, a notable species, found here in its largest North Hampshire station. The occurrence of several species usually associated with calcareous soils is also of interest, for example, burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*.

The variety of habitat types present within the SSSI is reflected by a correspondingly diverse invertebrate fauna. The boggy ditches within the SSSI support a number of breeding Odonata including the notable small red damselfly *Ceriagrion tenellum*. Eelmoor Marsh is also important as a feeding ground for the exceptionally rich dragonfly fauna of Eelmoor Flash, part of the adjacent Basingstoke Canal (Eelmoor) SSSI. The population of devil's-bit scabious within Eelmoor Marsh SSSI supports a colony of the marsh fritillary butterfly *Eurodryas aurinia* which is one of Britain's most rapidly declining butterfly species, due to drainage of its former habitats. Eelmoor Marsh SSSI is also important for its population of the silver-studded blue butterfly *Plebejus argus*.